

Revisionism and the Promotion of Peace

web.archive.org/web/20111011172710/https://codoh.com/viewpoints/vphebpeace.html

The Wayback Machine -

<https://web.archive.org/web/20111011172710/http://codoh.com/viewpoints/vphebpeace.html>

REVISIONIST VIEWPOINTS

HARRY ELMER BARNES

"Revisionism and the Promotion of Peace" was first published in the Summer 1958 issue of the magazine, Liberation.

During the last forty years or so, Revisionism has become a fighting term. To so-called Revisionists, it implies an honest search for historical truth and the discrediting of misleading myths that are a barrier to peace and goodwill among nations. In the minds of anti-Revisionists, the term savors of malice, vindictiveness, and an unholy desire to smear the saviors of mankind.

Actually, Revisionism means nothing more or less than the effort to correct the historical record in the light of a more complete collection of historical facts, a more calm political atmosphere, and a more objective attitude. It has been going on ever since Lorenzo Valla (1407-1457) exposed the forged "Donation of Constantine," which was a cornerstone of the papal claim to secular power, and he later called attention to the unreliable methods of Livy in dealing with early Roman history. Indeed, the Revisionist impulse long antedated Valla, and it has been developing ever since that time. It had been employed in American history long before the term came into rather general use following the first World War.

Revisionism has been most frequently and effectively applied to correcting the historical record relative to wars, because truth is always the first war casualty, the emotional disturbances and distortions in historical writing are greatest in wartime, and both the need and the material for correcting historical myths are most evident in connection with wars.

Revisionism was applied to the American Revolution many years ago. Beginning with the writings of men like George Louis Beer, it was shown that the British commercial policy toward the Colonies was not as harsh and lawless as it had been portrayed by George Bancroft and others among the early ultra-patriotic historians. Others demonstrated that the British measures imposed on the colonies after the close of the French and Indian War were in general accord with the British constitutional system. Finally, Clarence W. Alvord made it clear that Britain was more concerned with the destiny of the Mississippi Valley than she was with such disturbances as those connected with the Stamp Act, the Boston Massacre and the Boston Tea Party.

The War of 1812 was similarly subjected to Revisionist correction. Henry Adams revealed that Timothy Pickering and the extreme anti-war Federalists played a decisive role in encouraging the British to continue their oppressive commercial policies that aided the American "warhawks" in leading this country into war. They misrepresented Jefferson's commercial and naval policies to an almost treasonable extent. More

recently, Irving Brant, in his notable biography of Madison, has shown that Madison was not actually pushed into war against his personal convictions by Clay, Calhoun, and the "warhawks," but made the decision for war on the basis of his own beliefs.

The Mexican War has been specifically treated by Revisionists. For a long time, historians who sought to correct the wartime passions of 1846 criticized Polk and the war group as rather conscienceless war-mongers, impelled by political ambition, who pounced without justification upon a helpless little country. Then, in 1919, along came Justin H. Smith, who, in his *The War With Mexico*, showed that there had been plenty of arrogance, defiance and provocation on the part of Santa Ana and the Mexicans.

"The Wrong War"

While the term Revisionism has been little used in connection with the process, the causes of the Civil War (War between the States) have been a field for far more extensive Revisionist research and restatement than the causes of either World War. This was made clear in the remarkable summary of Revisionist studies of the coming of the Civil War by Professor Howard K. Beale in 1946. The outcome of these scholarly efforts demonstrated that the Civil War, like General Bradley's description of the Korean War, was "the wrong war, in the wrong place at the wrong time." Hotheads on both sides brought on the war, while judicious restraint might easily have averted the catastrophe. Professor William A. Dunning and his seminar students at Columbia University rigorously applied Revisionism to the aftermath of the Civil War and vindictive reconstruction measures piloted through Congress by Charles Sumner and Thaddeus Stevens. Their verdict was popularized in Claude Bowers' book on The Tragic Era.

Revisionist historians soon tackled the propaganda concerning the Spanish-American War which had been fomented by Hearst and Pulitzer and exploited by the war camp among the Republicans of 1898. James Ford Rhodes showed how McKinley, with the full Spanish concessions to his demands in his pocket, concealed the Spanish capitulation. from Congress and demanded war. Further research has revealed that there is no conclusive evidence whatever that the Spanish sank the battleship Maine and has shown that Theodore Roosevelt quite illegally started the war by an unauthorized order to Admiral Dewey to attack the Spanish fleet at Manila while Secretary Long was out of his office. Julius H. Pratt and others have exposed the irresponsible war-mongering of the "war hawks" of 1898, such as Theodore Roosevelt, Henry Cabot Lodge and Albert J. Beveridge, and indicated the primary responsibility of Admiral Mahan for the expansionist philosophy upon which this rise of American imperialism was based.

Hence, long before the Austrian Archduke was assassinated by Serbian plotters on 28 June 1914, Revisionism had a long and impressive history and had been brought into use on all the important wars in which the United States had been engaged. Applied abroad to the FrancoPrussian War, it clearly proved that the initiative lay with France rather than Bismarck and the Prussians. But it was the first World War which brought the term "Revisionism" into general use. This was because many wished to use the historical studies of the causes of the War as the basis for a revision of the Treaty of Versailles, which had been based on a complete acceptance of the theory of sole German-Austrian responsibility for the outbreak of the European War in early August, 1914.

By that time, the new methods of communication, mass journalism, and greater mastery of propaganda techniques enabled the combatants to whip up popular opinion and mass hatred as never before in the history of warfare. Jonathan French Scott's *Five Weeks* revealed how the press stirred up violent hatreds in July, 1914. The intensity of feeling in the United States has recently been recalled in an impressive

manner in H.C. Peterson's *Opponents of War, 1917-1918*. As C. Hartley Grattan, the present writer, and others, have pointed out, the historians scrambled on the propaganda bandwagon with great alacrity and vehemence. It was almost universally believed that Germany was entirely responsible not only for the outbreak of war in 1914 but also for American entry in April, 1917. Anyone who publicly doubted this popular dogma was in danger of the tar bucket, and Eugene Debs was imprisoned by the man who had proclaimed the War to be one to make the world safe for democracy. Debs' crime was a statement that the War had an economic basis, precisely what Wilson himself declared in a speech on 5 September 1919.

There is no space here to go into the scope and nature of Revisionist studies on the causes of the first World War. We can only illustrate the situation by citing a few of the outstanding myths and indicating the manner in which they were disposed of by Revisionists.

Crown Council Myth

The most damaging allegation brought against Germany was that the Kaiser called together a Crown Council of the leading German government officials, ambassadors, and financiers on 5 July 1914, revealed to them that he was about to throw Europe into war, and told them to get ready for the conflict. The financiers demanded two weeks delay so as to be able to call in loans and sell securities. The Kaiser acceded to this demand, and left the next day on a well-publicized vacation cruise. This was designed to lull England, France and Russia into a false sense of security while Germany and Austria-Hungary secretly got ready to leap upon an unprepared and unsuspecting Europe. The first complete statement of this charge appeared in *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, which was ghost written by a leading American journalist, Burton J. Hendrick.

Professor Sidney B. Fay, the leading American Revisionist dealing with the outbreak of war in 1914, proved from the available documents that this Crown Council legend was a complete myth. Some of the persons alleged to have been at the Council meeting were not in Berlin at the time. The Kaiser's actual attitude on July 5th was completely at variance with that portrayed in the legend, and there was no such financial action as was implied. But it was a long time before it was revealed how Mr. Morgenthau got this story. It was known that he was an honorable man, and not even the most severe critics of the myth charged that he had deliberately concocted and disseminated a lie.

Many years later, Paul Schwarz, who was the personal secretary to the German Ambassador in Constantinople, Baron Hans von Wangenheim, revealed the facts. Von Wangenheim had a mistress in Berlin and, in the early days of the crisis of 1914, she demanded that he return at once to Berlin to settle some critical matters with her. He complied and, to conceal from his wife the real reason for his making the trip, he told her that the Kaiser had suddenly summoned him to Berlin. On his return, he told his wife about the fanciful Crown Council, that he had dreamed up. Shortly after this with his wife by his side, von Wangenheim met Morgenthau, then the American Ambassador at Constantinople, at a diplomatic reception. Morgenthau had heard about von Wangenheim's trip to Berlin and pressed him as to what had happened. Under the circumstances, von Wangenheim could only repeat the myth he had told his wife. To what extent liquor may have lessened his restraint and how much Morgenthau and Hendrick elaborated on what von Wangenheim actually told Morgenthau are not known and probably never will be.

This fantastic tale, created out of whole cloth, both indicates the need for Revisionism and demonstrates how momentous and tragic events may hang on the most palpable fabrications. Since Morgenthau's book did not appear until 1918, his tale about the fictitious Crown Council had a great influence upon Allied propaganda against

Germany at the end of the War. It was used in Lloyd George's campaign of 1918 advocating the hanging of the Kaiser and by the more vindictive makers of the Treaty of Versailles. It is quite possible that otherwise the latter would never have been able to write the war-guilt clause into the Treaty. Since historians are agreed that it was the Treaty of Versailles which prepared the way for the second World War, the hare-brained von Wangenheim. alibi of July, 1914, may have had some direct relation to the sacrifice of millions of lives and astronomical expenditures of money in the wars since 1939, with the possibility that the ultimate consequences may be the extermination of much of the human race through nuclear warfare.

Another item which was used to inflame opinion against the Germans was their invasion of Belgium. The Allied propaganda presented this as the main reason for the entry of England into the War and the final proof of the charge that the Germans had no regard for international law or the rights of small nations. Revisionist scholars proved that the British and French had for some time been considering the invasion of Belgium in the event of a European war, and that English officers had travelled over Belgium carefully surveying the terrain against this contingency. Further, the Germans offered to respect the neutrality of Belgium in return for British neutrality in the War. Finally, John Burns, one of the two members of the British Cabinet who resigned when Britain made the decision for war in 1914, told me personally in the summer of 1927 that the Cabinet decision for war had been made before a word had been said about the Belgian issue. The following year, the Memorandum on Resignation of the famed John Morley, the other Cabinet member who resigned in 1914 as a protest against the war policy, fully confirmed Burns' account of the matter.

Atrocity Tales

A third leading allegation which produced violent feelings against the Germans in the first World War was the charge that they had committed unique and brutal atrocities against civilians, especially in Belgium -mutilating children, women and the helpless, generally. They were said to have utilized the bodies of dead German and Allied soldiers to make fertilizers and soap, and otherwise to have behaved like degraded beasts. The distinguished British publicist, Lord James Bryce, was induced to lend his name to the authentication of these atrocity reports. After the War, a large number of books riddled these atrocity tales, notably Sir Arthur Ponsonby's *Falsehood in Wartime*, and J.M. Read's *Atrocity Propaganda*. The first World War was no picnic, but no informed scholar today believes that any considerable part of the alleged atrocities actually took place, or that the Germans were any more guilty of atrocious conduct than the other participants in the War.

Scholars and publicists who had been condemned to silence during the War soon sought to clear their consciences and set the record straight after the close of hostilities. Indeed Francis Neilson anticipated many basic Revisionist conclusions in his *How Diplomats Make War*, which was published in 1915 and may be regarded as the first important Revisionist book on the causes of the first World War. Lord Loreburn's *How the War Came*, a scathing indictment of the English diplomats, came out at the same time that the Treaty of Versailles was drafted.

The first American scholar thoroughly to challenge the wartime propaganda was Professor Sidney B. Fay of Smith College who brought out a series of three striking articles in the *American Historical Review*, beginning in July, 1920. These first aroused my interest in the facts. During the War, I had accepted the propaganda; indeed, had unwittingly written some of it. While I wrote some reviews and short articles dealing with the actual causes of the first World War between 1921 and 1924, I first got thoroughly involved in the Revisionist struggle when Herbert Croly of the *New Republic* induced me in March, 1924, to review at length the book of Professor Charles Downer Hazen,

Europe Since 1815. This aroused so much controversy that George W. Ochsoakes, editor of the *New York Times Current History Magazine*, urged me to set forth a summary of Revisionist conclusions at the time in the issue of May, 1924. This really launched the Revisionist battle in the United States.

Even the largest publishing houses and the best periodicals eagerly sought Revisionist material for publication. Professor Fay's *Origins of the World War*, J.S. Ewart's *Roots and Causes of the Wars*, and my *Genesis of the World War* were the leading Revisionist books in 1914 by American authors published in the United States. American Revisionists found allies in Europe: Georges Demartial, Alfred Fabre-Luce, and others, in France; Friedrich Stieve, Maximilian Montgelas, Alfred von Wegerer, Hermann Lutz, and others, in Germany; and G.P. Gooch, Raymond Beazley, and G. Lowes Dickinson, in England. Turning from the causes of war in Europe in 1914, other scholars, notable Charles C. Tansill, Walter Millis, and C. Hartley Grattan, told the truth about the entry of the United States into the War. Mauritz Hallgren produced the definitive indictment of American interventionist diplomacy from Wilson to Roosevelt in his *A Tragic Fallacy*.

At the outset, Revisionist writing was rather precarious. Professor Fay was not in peril, personally, for he wrote in a scholarly journal which the public missed or ignored. But when I began to deal with the subject in media read by at least the upper intellectual level of the "men on the street," it was a different matter. I recall giving a lecture in Trenton, New Jersey, in the early days of Revisionism and being bodily threatened by fanatics who were present. They were cowed and discouraged by the chairman of the evening, who happened to be a much respected former-Governor of New Jersey. Even in the autumn of 1924, a rather scholarly audience in Amherst, Massachusetts, became somewhat agitated and was only calmed down when Ray Stannard Baker expressed general agreement with my remarks.

Gradually, the temper of the country changed, but at first it was caused more by resentment against our former allies than by the impact of Revisionist writings. It was the "Uncle Shylock" talk of 1924-27 which turned the trick. This indication of implied Allied ingratitude for American aid in the War made the public willing to read and accept the truth relative to the causes, conduct, merits, and results of the first World War. Moreover, with the passage of time, the intense emotions of wartime had an opportunity to cool off. By the mid-1930's, when Walter Millis's *Road to War* appeared, it was welcomed by a great mass of American readers and was one of the most successful books of the decade. Revisionism had finally won out.

Interestingly enough, as a phase of the violent anti-Revisionism after 1945, there has set in a determined effort on the part of some historians and journalists to discredit the Revisionist scholarship of 1920-1939 and return to the myths of 1914-1920. This trend is devastatingly challenged and refuted by the eminent expert on World War I Revisionism, Hermann Lutz, in his book on German-French Unity (1957), which takes account of the most recent materials in the field.

Genesis of the Term

As we have already explained briefly, the historical scholarship that sought to produce the truth relative to the causes of the first World War came to be known as Revisionism. This was because the Treaty of Versailles had been directly based on the thesis of unique and sole German-Austrian responsibility for the coming of the war in 1914. By the mid-1920's, scholars had established the fact that Russia, France and Serbia were more responsible than Germany and Austria. Hence, from the, standpoint of both logic and factual material, the Treaty should have been revised in accordance with the newly

revealed truth. Nothing of the sort took place, and in 1933 Hitler appeared on the scene to carry out the revision of Versailles by force, with the result that another and more devastating world war broke out in 1939.

Since Revisionism, whatever its services to the cause of historical truth, failed to avert the second World War, many have regarded the effort to seek the truth about the responsibility for war as futile in any practical sense. But any such verdict is not conclusive. Had not the general political and economic situation in Europe, from 1920 onward, been such as overwhelmingly to encourage emotions and restrain reason, there is every probability that the Revisionist verdict on 1914 would have led to changes in the Versailles *Diktat* that would have preserved peace. In the United States, less disturbed by emotional cross-currents, Revisionism exerted an impressive influence, all of which worked for peace. It was partly responsible for increasing the restraint imposed on France at the time of the Ruhr invasion for the mitigation of the harsh reparations system, for the Nye investigation of the armament industry and its nefarious ramifications, and for our neutrality legislation.

The fact that, despite many months of the most vigorous and irresponsible propaganda for our intervention in the second World War, over eighty per cent of the American people were in favor of refraining from intervention on the very eve of Pearl Harbor proves that the impact of Revisionism on the the American public mind had been deep, abiding and salutary. If President Roosevelt had not been able to incite the Japanese to attack Pearl Harbor, the Revisionist campaign of the late 1920's might have saved the United States from the tragedies of the early 1940's and what may be the greater calamities which grew out of our intervention in the second World War and still lie ahead of us.

The Role of the Mass Media

Long before the second World War broke out at the beginning of September, 1939, it was evident that, ~ when it came, it would present an even more dramatic and formidable Revisionist problem at its close than did the first World War. The stage was all set for a much greater volume and variety of distorting hatreds than in the years before 1914, and the capacity to whip up passion and disseminate myths had notably increased in the interval. Many technical advances in journalism, larger newspaper staffs, especially of foreign "experts," and greater emphasis on foreign affairs, all made it certain that the press would play a far more effective role in swaying the masses than in 1914-18. Indeed, even in 1914, as Jonathan F. Scott and Oron J. Hale have made clear, the press was perhaps as potent a cause of the War as the folly of the heads of states and their diplomats. It was bound to exert an even more powerful and malevolent influence in 1939 and thereafter.

The techniques of propaganda had been enormously improved and were well-nigh completely removed from any moral restraint. The propagandists in 1939 and thereafter had at their disposal not only what had been learned relative to lying to the public during the first World War but also the impressive advances made in the techniques of public deceit for both civilian and military purposes after 1918. A leading English intelligence officer Sidney Rogerson, even wrote a book, published in 1938, in which he told his fellow-Englishmen how to handle Americans in the case of a second World War, warning them that they could not just use over again the methods which Sir Gilbert Parker and others had so successfully employed from 1914-1918 to beguile the American public. He suggested the new myths and strategy which would be needed. They began to be applied during the next year.

There was a far greater backlog of bitter hatreds for the propagandists to play upon by 1939. However much the Kaiser was lampooned and reviled during the war, he had been rather highly regarded before July, 1914. In 1913, at the time of the 25th

anniversary of his accession to the throne, such leading Americans as Theodore Roosevelt, Nicholas Murray Butler and former-President Taft praised the Kaiser lavishly. Butler contended that if he had been born in the United States he would have been put in the White House without the formality of an election, and Taft stated that the Kaiser has been the greatest single force for peace in the whole world during his entire reign. There were no such sentiments of affection and admiration held in reserve for Hitler and Mussolini in 1939. Butler had, indeed, called Mussolini the greatest statesman of the twentieth century, but this was in the 1920's. British propaganda against 11 Duce during the Ethiopian foray had put an end to most American admiration of him. The hatred built up against Hitler in the democracies by 1939 already exceeded that massed against any other figure in modern history. American and British conservatives hated Stalin and the Communists, and they were later linked with Germany and Hitler after the Russo-German Pact of August, 1939. This hatred of the Russians was fanned to a whiter flame when they invaded eastern Poland in the autumn of 1939 and Finland during the following winter. Racial differences and the color bogey made it easy to hate the Japanese and, after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the real facts about which were 'hot to be known until after the War, the hatred of the Japanese went so far that even leading American naval officers like Admiral Halsey could refer to the Japanese as literally subhuman anthropoids.

Against this background it was obvious that hatreds could thrive "without stint or limit," to use Mr. Wilson's phrase, and that lies could arise and luxuriate with abandon and without any effort to check on the facts, if there were any. Every leading country set up its official agency to carry on public deception for the duration and supported it lavishly with almost unlimited funds. It was more than evident that there would be a super-human task for Revisionism to wrestle with once hostilities had ended.

After the first World War, the Russians took the first important steps in launching Revisionism. The Communists wished to discredit the Tsarist regime and saddle it with responsibility for the first World War, so they published the voluminous documents containing the secret Franco-Russian agreements from 1892 to 1914. These, together with supplementary French materials, did prove that France, Russia and Serbia were mainly responsible for the outbreak of war in 1914. The Russian documents were followed by the publication of the archives in other countries, and I have already indicated that many important Revisionist books appeared in European countries.

Following the second World War, the overwhelming majority of Revisionist writings have been produced in the United States. There was no Tsar for the Russians to blame in 1945. Stalin desired to preserve intact the legend that he had been surprised and betrayed by Hitler in the Nazi attack of June 22, 1941. England was watching her Empire disintegrate, and the British leaders were aware of the primary responsibility of Britain for the outbreak of war in 1939; hence, every effort was made to discourage Revisionist writing in England. France was torn with hatreds far worse than those of the French Revolution, and over 100,000 Frenchmen were butchered either directly or quasi-legally during the "liberation." Only the famous journalist, Sisley Huddleston, an expatriate Englishman resident in France, the distinguished publicist, Alfred Fabre-Luce, and the implacable Jacques Benoist-Mechin, produced anything that savored of Revisionism in France. Germany and Italy, under the heels of conquerors for years, were in no position to launch Revisionist studies. Even when these countries were freed, the hatred of Hitler and Mussolini which had survived the war discouraged Revisionist work. Only Hans Grimm and Ernst von Salomon produced anything resembling Revisionism in Germany, and their works were not devoted to diplomatic history. The only book which has appeared in Germany that can literally be regarded as a Revisionist volume is the recent work of Fritz Hesse, *Hitler and the English*. This amplifies the already known fact that Hitler lost the war primarily because of his Anglomania and his unwillingness to use his full military power against the English

when victory was possible. In Italy, the eminent scholar and diplomatic historian, Luigi Villari, wrote an able book on the foreign policy of Mussolini, which is one of the substantial products of post-World War II Revisionism, but he had to get the book published in the United States. The same was true of his book on the "liberation" of Italy after 1943.

Historical Blackout

In the United States, Revisionism got off to an early start and flourished relatively, so far as the production of substantial books was concerned. This relative profusion of Revisionist literature was, however, far surpassed by the almost insuperable obstacles that were met in trying to get such literature known to the public and read by it. In other words, an unprecedented volume of Revisionist books was accompanied by an even more formidable "historical blackout" that has thus far concealed such material from the reading public.

The reasons for the relatively greater productivity of Revisionism in the United States after 1945 are not difficult to discover. There had been over four years of debate about the European and world situation between President Roosevelt's Chicago Bridge Speech of October, 1937, and the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Most of the men who produced Revisionist books after 1945 had taken part in this great debate, had gathered materials on the issues, and were well aware of the realities and of the lies told by the Interventionists. They were eager to come forth with books to sustain their old position as soon as the end of hostilities made this possible. Pearl Harbor had only silenced them for the duration. Further, the United States had been untouched by the ravages of war, it was in good economic condition at V-J Day, and it had not lost any colonial possessions. Four years of vigorous debate before Pearl Harbor and nearly four years of passionate lying and hating after that date had at least slightly exhausted the American capacity for hatred for the time being, as compared with the existing situation in Europe and Asia. There was at least a slight and brief breathing spell until hatreds were revived when Truman launched the Cold War in March, 1947.

Some Revisionist Books

We have space to mention only the outstanding Revisionist products in the United States. John T. Flynn's *As We Go Marching* was published in 1944, his pioneer brochures on Pearl Harbor in 1944 and 1945, and his *The Roosevelt Myth* in 1948. George Morgenstern's *Pearl Harbor* appeared in 1947; Charles Austin Beard's two volumes on Roosevelt's foreign policy were brought out in 1946 and 1948; and Helen Mears' *Mirror for Americans: Japan*, came out in 1948. William Henry Chamberlin's *America's Second Crusade* was published in 1950; Frederic R. Sanborn's *Design for War* came off the presses in 1951; Charles C. Tansill's *Back Door to War* made its appearance in 1952; the Symposium, *Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace*, which I edited, presents the best anthology of Revisionist conclusions on the second World War, came out in the summer of 1953; and Richard N. Current's *Secretary Stimson* was published in 1954. Admiral R.A. Theobald's *The Final Secret of Pearl Harbor* appeared in 1954; Rene A. Wormser's *The Myth of the Good and Bad Nations* came out in the same year; Admiral H.E. Kimmel's *Admiral Kimmel's Story*, was published in 1955; Bryton Barron's *Inside the State Department* was brought out in 1956; and Elizabeth C. Brown's *The Enemy at His Back* was published in 1957.

In addition to these books by American Revisionists, there was an impressive list of volumes by Europeans who had to escape the even more stringent historical blackout at home and secure respectable publication in the United States. Such were Sisley Huddleston's books on *Popular Diplomacy and War*, and *France: the Tragic Years*; the trenchant criticisms of the war-crimes trials by Lord Hankey and Montgomery Belgium;

the remarkable book of F.J.P. Veale, *Advance to Barbarism*, which criticized both the barbarous saturation bombing of civilians and the war-crimes trials; Russell Grenfell's devastating exposure of Germanophobia in his *Unconditional Hatred*; Emrys Hughes' brilliant biographical study of *Winston Churchill*; and Dr. Villari's volumes on Mussolini's foreign policy and the Allied liberation of Italy. There were a number of other books on the periphery of literal Revisionism, of which Freda Utley's *High Cost of Vengeance*, dealing with the Allied folly and barbarism in Germany after V-E Day, is representative and one of the more notable. Along with it might be mentioned such books as Andy Rooney and Bud Hutton's *Conqueror's Peace*, Marshall Knappen's *And Call It Peace*, Milton Mayer's *They Thought They Were Free*, and Harold Zink's *American Military Government in Germany*.

What We Now Know

Not only have there been many more formidable Revisionist volumes published in the United States since 1945 than in the comparable period after 1918, but the facts revealed by this recent Revisionist research have been far more sensational than those produced by Revisionist scholars after the first World War. From 1937 onward Stalin had worked as hard for a war of attrition and mutual destruction between the capitalistic Nazi, Fascist and democratic countries as Sazonov and Izvolski did in 1914 to start a Franco-Russian war against Germany and Austria. Hitler, far from precipitately launching an aggressive war against Poland on the heels of brutal and unreasonable demands, made a far greater effort to avert war during the August, 1939, crisis than the Kaiser did during the crisis of July, 1914. And Hitler's demands on Poland were the most reasonable ones he made on any foreign country during his whole regime. They were far more conciliatory than Stresemann and the Weimar Republic would even consider. Poland was far more unreasonable and intransigent in 1938-39 than Serbia had been in 1914. Mussolini sought to dissuade Hitler from going to war in 1939 and made repeated efforts to summon peace conferences after the War began. Far from wantonly sticking "a dagger in the back of France" in June, 1940, he was virtually forced into the War by unneutral acts of economic strangulation on the part of Britain. France was loath to go to war in 1939, and only extreme pressure by the British Foreign Office prodded Bonnet and Daladier into reluctantly acceding to the bellicose British policy on September 2-3, 1939.

Whereas, in 1914, British responsibility for the first World War was chiefly that of weakness and duplicity on the part of Sir Edward Grey—more a negative than a positive responsibility—the British were almost solely responsible for the outbreak of both the German-Polish and the European Wars in early September, 1939. Lord Halifax, the British Foreign Minister, and Sir Howard Kennard, the British Ambassador in Warsaw, were even more responsible for the European War of 1939 than Sazonov, Izvolski, and Poincaré were for that of 1914. Chamberlain's speech before Parliament on the night of September 2, 1939, was as mendacious a misrepresentation of the German position as had been Sir Edward Grey's address to Parliament on August 3, 1914.

The Case Against Roosevelt

As for American entry into the second World War, the case against President Roosevelt is far more impressive and damaging than that against Woodrow Wilson, who maintained at least some formal semblance of neutrality for a time after August, 1914. Roosevelt "lied the United States into war." He went as far as he dared in illegal efforts, such as convoying vessels carrying munitions, to provoke Germany and Italy to make war on the United States. Failing in this, he turned to a successful attempt to enter the War through the back door of Japan. He rejected repeated and sincere Japanese proposals that even Hull admitted protected all the vital interests of the United States in the Far East, by his economic strangulation in the summer of 1941 forced the Japanese into an attack on Pearl Harbor, took steps to prevent the Pearl Harbor

Commanders, General Short and Admiral Kimmel, from having their own decoding facilities to detect a Japanese attack, kept Short and Kimmel from receiving the decoded Japanese intercepts that Washington picked up and indicated that war might come at any moment, and ordered General Marshall and Admiral Stark not to send any warning to Short and Kimmel before noon on December 7th, when Roosevelt knew that any warning sent would be too late to avert the Japanese attack at 1:00 P.M., Washington time.

Roosevelt also had a major responsibility, both direct and indirect, for the outbreak of war in Europe. He began to exert pressure on France to stand up to Hitler as early as the German reoccupation of the Rhineland in March, 1936, months before he was making his strongly isolationist speeches in the campaign of 1936. This pressure on France, and also England, continued right down to the coming of the War in September, 1939. It gained volume and momentum after the Quarantine Speech of October, 1937. As the crisis approached between Munich and the outbreak of war, Roosevelt pressed the Poles to stand firm against any demands by Germany, and urged the English and French to back up the Poles unflinchingly. From captured Polish and French archives, the Germans collected no less than five volumes of material consisting almost exclusively of Roosevelt's bellicose pressure on European countries, mainly France and Poland. The Allies later seized them. Only a small portion has ever been published, most notably some seized by the Germans in Poland in 1939 and published as the *German White Paper*. It is highly probable that the material covering Roosevelt's pressure on England might amount to more than five volumes. There is no certainty whatever that England would have gone to war in September, 1939, had it not been for Roosevelt's encouragement and his assurances that, in the event of war, the United States would enter on the side of Britain just as soon as he could swing American public opinion around to support intervention. Yet, when the crisis became acute after August 23, 1939, Roosevelt sent several messages for the record urging that war be avoided through negotiations.

Despite this voluminous Revisionist literature which appeared since 1945 and its sensational content, there is still virtually no public knowledge of Revisionist facts some thirteen years after V4 Day. The "man on the street" is just as prone to accept Roosevelt's "Day of Infamy" legend today as he was on December 8, 1941. A member of the state historical department of a leading eastern state recently wrote me that he had never heard of any Revisionist movement relative to the second World War until he read my article in the Spring, 1958, issue of *Modern Age*. By 1928, most literate Americans had a passable knowledge of the facts about the coming of war in 1914 and the American entry in 1917. What are the reasons for the strange contrast in the progress of realistic knowledge after 1918 and after 1945, so our examination of the reasons for the blockage of knowledge may be limited to the United States.

A main reason why Revisionism has made little headway since 1945 in attracting public attention in the United States is that the country never really had time to cool off after the War. We have pointed out above that the situation was not as acute here after 1945 as in Europe and Japan, but it was far more tense than it was in the United States in the 1920's. Even as early as the Congressional campaign and election of 1918, there was a rift in the wartime political monolith. By the campaign of 1920, disillusionment with the war had set in and a trend toward isolation from European quarrels had begun to assert itself. The United States refused to sign the Treaty of Versailles or to enter the League of Nations. There was a cooling off period for about twenty years after 1918. As late as 1941, the overwhelming majority of the American people wished to remain aloof from the European War, and Roosevelt had great difficulty in forcing through a peacetime draft law and in getting any repeal of the neutrality legislation.

Nothing like this happened following 1945. By March, 1946, Winston Churchill was proclaiming the Cold War in his speech at Fulton, Missouri, delivered with the benediction of President Truman, and a year later Truman actually launched the Cold War. This led, in 1950, to the outbreak of a hot war in Korea. The Orwellian technique of basing political tenure and bogus economic prosperity on cold and phony warfare had taken over by 1950, to enjoy an indefinite domination over the public mind. A hot war spontaneously provides plenty of genuine, even if dangerous and misguided, emotion, but a cold war has to be built up by propaganda and mythology and sustained on synthetic excitement which is provided by planned propaganda. The tortures of "1984," as administered by the "Ministry of Love," have not as yet proved necessary in the United States. The American public proved more susceptible to simple brainwashing through propaganda than Orwell could imagine, although he was himself a veteran propagandist on the BBC. Orwellian doublethinking has enabled the Truman and Eisenhower Administrations to formulate and enforce mutually contradictory policies, and the "crimestop" technique of the Orwellian semantic system prevents the public, and many of its leaders, from thinking through any program or proclamation. A policy of perpetual war for perpetual peace does not appear unreasonable or illogical to the American public. Thus far, the propaganda carried on by our "Ministry of Truth," with the almost unanimous aid of our press, has been sufficient to maintain popular support of the Cold War.

It is obvious that such a brainwashed and excited public is not likely to concern itself seriously with facts and writings that are designed to discredit warfare and furnish a solid basis for substantial peace. It should be about like expecting desert sheiks to concentrate on books devoted to water polo or outboard motorboat racing. The public mind has become all but impenetrable on such matters. In the mid-1920's, for the Allies to deride Uncle Sam as "Uncle Shylock" relative to a paltry 12 billion dollars of war debts made Americans so angry that they were willing to listen to Revisionist conclusions. In the mid-1950's, even such flagrantly offensive and ungrateful gestures as "Yanks Go Home," after the United States had poured tens of thousands of lives and over 65 billion dollars of foreign aid appropriations and the public appeared to approve. Congressmen like John Taber, who for years had sought to kill as many appropriations as possible which were devoted to the effort to create a better life here at home, proclaimed that foreign aid was so important that it transcended the considerations of restraint, thrift and economy which they had so long demanded of appropriations to be used within our own borders.

The Fearful Fifties

Another explanation of the antipathy or indifference of the public to Revisionism since 1945 is to be found in the sharply contrasting intellectual atmosphere of the 1920's and of the period since 1945. Conditions in the 1920's and early 1930's were the most conducive to independent and fearless thought of any decade in modern American history. This was the period of Mencken and Nathan, of the height of the popularity of H.G. Wells. It was an era when James Harvey Robinson's *Mind in the Making* could become a best seller and Thorstein Veblen was the most respected American economist. Since 1945, we have run into a period of intellectual conformity unmatched since the supreme power and unity of the Catholic Church at the height of the Middle Ages. Between the pressures exerted by the Orwellian cold-war system and those which are equally powerful in the civilian or commercial world, intellectual individuality and independence have all but disappeared. In this era of *Nineteen Eighty-four*, "The Organization Man The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit," the "Hidden Persuaders," and "Madison Avenue," even the average American college graduate is no more inclined to independent thinking than was a Catholic peasant during the papacy of Innocent III.

Another reason for the unprecedented resistance of Revisionism after the second World War is the fact that the liberals and radicals, who became the shocktroops and spearhead of Revisionism in the 1920's, have since 1945 been overwhelmingly the chief opponents of any acceptance of Revisionist facts and conclusions. They were the leaders of the war party in Britain, France and the United States for months or years before 1939 and 1941, and they have never recanted. Although most of the prominent liberals heartily supported Wilson's war after 1917, they were completely disillusioned by the "Peace" Treaty and led the Revisionist parade after 1919. Especially notable were Herbert Croly and his editorial associates on the New Republic. They recanted, but plenty. Oswald Garrison Villard and most of his associates on the Nation did not need to recant, for they had never supported American intervention in 1917 with any enthusiasm.

"The Facts Be Damned"

A leading reason why the liberals and radicals have been unable to revise their pre-war views and attitudes is that their hatred of Hitler and Mussolini has been just too great to permit them to accept any facts, however well established, that might to any degree diminish the guilt with which these men were charged from 1939 onward - or from 1935, for that matter. In such a case, "facts can be damned." There was no comparable pre-war hatred of Stalin on their part for them to have to live down. The hatred of Hitler has been especially bitter among some minority groups that were notably enthusiastic about the Revisionism that followed the first World War.

Indeed, the aversion to setting down any historical facts that might present the diplomacy of Hitler and Mussolini in any more favorable light than that of wartime appears to have extended to most Revisionists of today, even to those of a conservative temperament. After the first World War, most of the Revisionist historical writing was on the European background of August, 1914. There were only three important Revisionist books written on the American entry into the War-those by Tansill, Grattan and Millis, while there were a score or more on the European situation published in Europe and the United States. The first definitive book on American entry, Tansill's *America Goes to War*, did not appear until 1938, ten years after Fay's *Origins of the World War*.

After the second World War, all of the Revisionist books written by American authors have dealt chiefly with American entry into the War. There has not been a Revisionist book or a substantial Revisionist article which sets forth the truth about 1939. The nearest approach is the able and informed treatment of the European background in Tansill's classic *Back Door to War*, but this book is devoted primarily to the American entry into the War. Either aversion to even the slightest mitigation of the wartime indictment of Hitler and Mussolini, or fear of the results, appears to have prevented even Revisionists in both the United States and Europe from having systematically tackled the crisis of 1939 in nearly twenty years after the events.

In the light of the fact that, earlier in this article, I have summarized the Revisionist conclusions about responsibility for the outbreak of the wars in 1939, it may legitimately be asked how I know about such matters if no definitive book has yet been published on this subject. All that I have stated is sustained by Professor Tansill's *Back Door to War*. But there has also recently been completed a detailed treatment of the 1939 crisis by a superbly equipped scholar. This book will rank with the monumental work of Professor Fay on 1914. I have read this manuscript with great care and thoroughness. As a work of scholarship, it was approved by the most illustrious history department in the world today. The remaining problem is one of publication.

The anti-interventionist groups of 1937 and thereafter, like America First, were primarily conservative and for the most part welcomed the early Revisionist publications. But they soon fell in line with the Cold War because of the business advantages in industry, trade and finance which an extravagant armament program provided. Thereafter, they feared or refused to give any open support, financial or otherwise, to a scholarly movement which undermined the cold-war assumptions as thoroughly as it did the interventionist mythology of 1939-1941. Hence, Revisionism since 1947 has not only been unpopular or ignored but also poverty-stricken. On the other hand, the rich foundations have given lavish aid to the writing of anti-Revisionist books. About \$150,000 was given to aid the publication of the Langer and Gleason volumes, the most impressive effort to whitewash the diplomatic record of Roosevelt and Churchill.

Other factors have led to the almost incredible obstruction of Revisionism since 1945. The excessive "security" policies and measures which have been adopted under the cold-war system have greatly increased fear and timidity on the part of public officials, scholars and general public. Since Revisionism logically challenged the whole fabric of American public policy since Pearl Harbor, it was precarious to espouse it. It has become dangerous to work for peace except through war. The press, naturally, prefers the emotion-provoking frame of reference of a Cold War to the prosaic scholarship of Revisionism. In the 1920's, the press was congenial to Revisionism because it buttressed our prevailing public policies relative to reparations, war debts, isolationism, disarmament, neutrality and the like. Today, Revisionism challenges the honesty, intelligence, and integrity of our basic foreign policies by its devastating revelation of the disastrous results of our martial world-meddling since 1937.

Especially important is the difficulty in having Revisionist books published under auspices likely to arouse public interest and knowledge and in getting them presented to the reading public honestly and effectively. There have only been two publishers, and these relatively small ones, which have consistently published Revisionist books: the Henry Regnery Company in Chicago; and the Devin-Adair Company in New York City. Only five other small publishers have produced a Revisionist book—one book only in each of these cases save for the Yale University Press, which brought out both of Beard's volumes because the director was a close friend and great admirer of Beard. University presses have found it precarious to indulge in Revisionist publication; W.T.Couch, the able head of the University of Chicago Press, was dismissed primarily because he published so peripheral a Revisionist volume as A. Frank Reel's admirable book, *The Case of General Yamashita*.

Not one large commercial publisher in the United States has brought out a single substantial and literal Revisionist book since Pearl Harbor. This stands out in sharp contrast to the attitude of publishers toward Revisionist volumes in the 1920's and early 1930's. The largest publishers were then very eager to get such books. Professor Fay's classic work was published by the Macmillan Company, and the monumental two-volume work of John S. Ewart by Doran. Alfred Knopf published my *Genesis* and a veritable library of Revisionist books in the 1920's, but in 1953 he refused even to consider such a mild and restrained Revisionist book as Professor Current's scholarly study of the public career of Secretary Henry L. Stimson.

There are a number of obvious reasons why the big publishers shy away from Revisionist books today. In the first place, they are American citizens and, for reasons already discussed, like most of their fellow Americans, they dislike giving up their pre-war and war-time convictions, emotions, hatreds and prejudices; most of them just do not like Revisionists and Revisionism. Further, knowing that Revisionism is publicly unpopular, they realize that Revisionist books are not likely to sell well; hence, Revisionist publication is relatively poor business. Moreover, those publishers who may privately espouse Revisionism and would like to see some Revisionist books published,

even if they had to do it with slight profit or even a small loss, just cannot consider a Revisionist book on its own merits or by itself alone. They have to take into account its possible effect on the general publishing trade and the book-buying public. The loss that they could sustain through merely publishing a Revisionist volume might be nothing as compared to what they would lose by the unfortunate impression such publication might make or from the retaliation which might follow.

Fear of the Book Clubs

They are especially alarmed at the possible retaliation at the hands of the various book clubs, since all the powerful ones are tightly controlled by those groups and interests most hostile to Revisionism today. William Henry Chamberlin's *America's Second Crusade* is the one Revisionist treatment of the second World War which is admirable suited for popular sale and reading. It is precisely comparable to Walter Millis' *Road to War* on our entry into the first World War. The Millis book was a Book-of-the-Club selection and sold by the hundreds of thousands. The head of one of the largest publishing houses in the world knew and liked Chamberlin, admired his book, and personally would have liked to publish it. But he held, quite understandably, that he did not feel that he could do so in the light of his responsibilities to his stockholders. As he put it, if he published the Chamberlin book, his company probably would not get another Book-of-the-Month-Club adoption in a decade. The Chamberlin book was published by Henry Regnery.

A comparison of its fate with that of the Millis *Road to War* is instructive. Macy's, in New York City, ordered fifty copies of the Chamberlin book and returned forty as 61 unsold." If it could have been handled on its merits, surely five or six thousand copies would have been sold. A year after the date of publication, there was still not a copy of the book in the New York Public Library or any of its branches. Revisionist books are virtually boycotted, so far as sales to the general run of public libraries are concerned. The woman who exerts a greater influence upon library book orders than any other person in the United States is violently anti-Revisionist. She sees to it that Revisionist books are either ignored or smeared in her advice to librarians seeking guidance as to purchases.

Even when Revisionist books get into stores, clerks frequently refuse to display them and, in some cases, even lie about their availability. In the book department of America's outstanding store, a woman sought to purchase a copy of the most widely read Revisionist book. The clerk told her decisively that the supply was exhausted and no copies were available. The customer suspected that she was lying and was able to get the head of the store to make an investigation. It was found that over fifty copies were hidden under the counter and that the clerk knew that this was the case. The head of the store was so outraged that he ordered the book department to make a special display of the hitherto concealed book.

The leading magazines are just as reluctant to publish Revisionist articles as the great commercial publishers are to publish any Revisionist books. This is also is complete contrast to the situation in the 1920's when the editors of the better periodicals were eager to get authoritative articles by leading Revisionism in the 1920's and early 1930's were solicited by the editors. So far as I know this was true of other Revisionist writers. But not a substantial Revisionist article has been printed in a popular and powerful American periodical since Pearl Harbor. The reasons for editorial allergy to Revisionist articles are the same as those that affect the heads of the large commercial publishing houses relative to Revisionist books.

Incredible as it may seem, not only publishers but even printers have sought to suppress Revisionist material. When I presented a restrained brochure, based on extensive research and designed to set forth the basic facts about the military and

political career of Marshal Petain, to a printing firm in New York City, the printers refused to put the material into type unless it was approved by the censorship department of one of the most powerful and vehemently anti-Revisionist minority groups in the country. Whereupon, I took the copy to a leading upstate New York printing firm which was not accessible to this form of pressure. The episode reminded one of the pre-publication censorship which existed back in the days of Copernicus.

Fate of the Reviews

The handicaps imposed on Revisionist books are not limited to the difficulties of publication and distribution. When these books are published they have usually been ignored, obscured or smeared. They have rarely been given decent notice or honest reviews, even if the opinion of the reviewer might be unfavorable. As one of the leading blackout organizations has advised its agents, it is preferable to ignore a book entirely if one wishes to assure killing its distribution and influence. Even a viciously unfair review will at least call attention to the volume and may arouse some curiosity and interest. To ignore it completely will do more than anything else to consign it to oblivion. Under the editorship of Guy Stanton Ford, it was the announced policy of the *American Historical Review* not to review "controversial" volumes, but, upon careful examination, it turned out that "controversial" meant "Revisionist." The most controversial anti-Revisionist books in the field were given good position and reviews as long as those usually accorded to books of comparable importance.

When Revisionist books are actually listed and reviewed, they are usually given an obscure position, often in the book notes. This was the case with Dr. Luigi Villari's book on *Italian Foreign Policy under Mussolini*. Although it was a book of major importance in diplomatic history-the only authoritative volume which had appeared on the subject and the author was the most distinguished living authority in the field, the book was consigned to the book note section of the *American Historical Review*, and outrageously smeared. It should be pointed out, in fairness, that since Dr. Boyd C. Shafer succeeded Dr. Ford as editor, Revisionist books have been given a somewhat more decent treatment in the *American Historical Review*. Space limitations do not permit me to cite here in detail the fate of the leading Revisionist books at the hands of scholarly periodicals, and the book review sections of leading periodicals, and the newspapers. I have gone into this matter at length in the first chapter of *Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace*.

The essence of the situation is that no matter how many Revisionist books are produced, how high their quality, or how sensational their revelations, they will have no effect on the American public until this public learns of the existence, nature and importance of Revisionist literature. That they have not been able to do so as yet is obvious, and the obstacles that have thus far proved effective have not been reduced to any noticeable extent. It is for this reason that honest historians and publicists will welcome the apparent desire of the editors of *Liberation* to open its columns to a discussion of Revisionism and to the revelation of its import for the public welfare of the country. It is the first step which has been taken in this direction in a liberal magazine since Pearl Harbor.

Favoritism

Thus far I have dealt almost exclusively with the private or non-official efforts to obscure the truth relative to the causes and results of the second World War. The official censorship has been as unrelenting and in many ways more shocking. Those who publish official documents do not have to be restrained by considerations of profit and loss. More than a decade ago, Charles Austin Beard, blasted the procedure of the State Department in its tendency to permit historians favorable to the official foreign policy to use the public documents rather freely, while denying such access to anybody

suspected of Revisionist sympathies. This led to some momentary relaxation of censorship, and it was fortunate that Professor Tansill. was able to carry on much of his research at this time. But soon the censorship and restrictions returned full force.

The Republicans promised drastic reform of this abuse when they came into power in 1953, but they failed to implement these assurances and, under Secretary Dulles, the scandal grew to, far greater proportions than under Democratic auspices. The same historical advisor, Dr. G. Bernard Noble, was continued in the service and actually promoted to be Director of the Historical Division of the State Department. He was a Democrat, a Rhodes scholar, and known to be one of the most frenzied advocates of our intervention in the second World War among all American social scientists and an implacable enemy of Revisionism.

In May, 1953, the State Department promised that all records of the international conferences during the second World War would be ready for publication within a year and that all other documents on the period since 1939 would be speedily published.

Nothing was done until the spring of 1955, when the documents on the Yalta Conference were finally published. It was evident, and soon proved, that these had been garbled and censored in flagrant fashion. Two able members of the historical staff of the Department, Dr. Bryton Barron and Dr. Donald Dozer, protested against this suppression and garbling of documents. Noble forced Barron into premature retirement without pay and discharged Dozer. The latter was reinstated by the Civil Service Commission, but Noble was able to get him discharged a second time-and this time permanently. Barron had been assigned to compile the material bearing on the Yalta Conference, and Dozer that on the Cairo-Teheran Conferences. Only one other publication has since been produced, some incomplete documents on 1939. This appeared during the last year and was also censored and garbled.

In the meantime, some 37 volumes dealing with our foreign policy since 1939 were collected and made ready for publication. But nothing was sent to the printer and, in the spring of 1958, the State Department blandly announced that it did not propose to publish any of these volumes in the predictable future. It gave as the reason the assertion that publication might possibly offend some persons among our NATO allies. To give this amazing procedure some semblance of historical authority, the State Department had appointed a hand-picked committee in 1957 to advise the Department on publication. The personnel of the committee, which did not contain one Revisionist historian, assured that the right advice would be turned in. The chairman was none other than Professor Dexter Perkins, admittedly a jolly and affable historical politician, but also one of the half-dozen outstanding and unremitting opponents of Revisionist scholarship in this country. The committee dutifully reported that publication of any of the 37 volumes lying on the shelves awaiting the government printers would not be politically expedient.

When Dr. Barron appeared before a Senatorial committee to protest against the censorship and delays, he was allowed only eleven minutes to testify, although witnesses supporting the official censorship were allowed ample time. As one of the abler editorial writers in the country commented, quite correctly: "Such a record of concealment and duplicity is unparalleled. Its only counterpart is the 'memory hole' in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, where an authoritarian regime of the future was depicted as disposing of all document and facts that failed to fit into the current party line." All this is hardly consistent with the assumed role of the United States as the leader of the "Free Nations" or with our bitter condemnation of the Russians for censoring their official documents.

There are, of course, some vital official documents dealing with the onset of the second World War that the Government has never even dreamed of publishing at any time and are so full of dynamite that not even historians engaged in whitewashing the official record are allowed to use them. Such are the so-called "Kent Documents," namely, the nearly 2000 secret messages illegally exchanged in the American code between Churchill and Roosevelt from September, 1939, onward. Churchill, himself, has frankly told us that these documents contain most of the really vital facts about the collaboration between him and Roosevelt in their joint efforts to bring the United States into the War. When the most impressive historical effort to whitewash the Roosevelt-Churchill record was about to be undertaken, Churchill threatened the principal author with a court suit if he made use of these "Kent Documents."

The suppression of documents relative to responsibility for the second World War extends, of course, far beyond all Anglo-American activities and relations. When the Communists and Socialists in Russia, Germany and Austria published their archives following 1918 in order to discredit the old imperial regimes, this forced the British and French ultimately to do the same. Eventually, scholars had virtually all the factual material at their disposal.

Nothing like this has been possible after the second World War. The victorious Allied Powers, chiefly Britain and the United States, captured the German and Italian archives, except for some of the more vital Italian materials which the Italian Communists destroyed, with Allied connivance, when they captured and murdered Mussolini. Today, Germany and Italy could not publish all their documents even if they wished to do so, for they do not possess them. Some have been returned to Italy, and the Germans have been promised theirs. But one may be sure that any material which seriously reflects on the United States and Britain will not be included. Publication thus far has been limited to what the American and British authorities have seen fit to release, and there is no evidence that it has been any more fully and honestly presented than the documents on the Yalta Conference. Nor can the Germans and Italians be expected to publish anything likely to modify the wartime indictment of Hitler and Mussolini. Unlike the Weimar Republic, the Adenauer Government is vigorously opposed to Revisionist scholarship and publication. The same is true of the Italian Government.

The main import of all this official censorship is that the Revisionist verdict relative to responsibility for the second World War is far less drastic than it will be if and when all the documents are available. If the documents now suppressed in such abundance and with such thoroughness would lessen the already severe indictment of the wartime leaders, elementary logic and strategy support the assumption that they would have been published long before the present moment in order to modify or eliminate the severe judgments already set forth in existing Revisionist volumes.

One paradox should be noted relative to the status and results of Revisionism after the two World Wars. After the first World War, the Revisionist verdict as to the responsibility for the war was very generally accepted by scholars and intelligent public leaders, but little was done about it in the way of revising the European post-war system that had been based on the lies and propaganda of wartime. If the logical steps had been taken to revise the post-war treaties while the German Republic was in existence, it is unlikely that Hitler would ever have risen to power in Germany, that there would ever have been any second World War, or that any Cold War would have come on its heels. After the second World War, while the facts brought forth by Revisionism as to the responsibility for the War have been ignored, indeed, are virtually unknown to the public among the victorious Allies, there has been an almost complete revision of public policy toward our former enemies. Both Germany and Japan have been almost forcibly rearmed and given extensive material aid so that they can now function as allies against our former

ally, Soviet Russia. One can imagine the outcry if, say in 1925, we had insisted that Germany and Austria must re-arm to the hilt and we had expressed our determination to enable them to do so.

Any such situation as has taken place since 1945 could only be possible in an era of Orwellian double-thinking and "crimestop." We spent about 400 billion dollars to destroy Germany and Japan and, after their destruction, we have poured in more billions to restore their military power. If it were conceivable that we could fight a third world war without exterminating all the participants, we might envisage a situation where, after destroying Russia, we proceeded to give her billions to rebuild her fighting power to defend us against China and India.

One lesson that Revisionism might teach us is that we should learn from it public attitudes which could protect us against repeated folly and tragedy. The eminent philosopher, John Dewey, told a friend of mine that if he had not been so wrong in his attitude toward the first World War (as exemplified by his *German Philosophy and Politics*), he might have succumbed to the propaganda that led us into the Second World War. But publics appear to profit less by experience than pragmatic philosophers. They seem to vindicate Hegel's classic observation that the only lesson that history teaches us is that we learn nothing from history. In an age of hydrogen bombs, intercontinental guided missiles, terrifyingly lethal chemical and bacterial warfare, and pushbutton military technology, we shall have to do better than the publics of Hegel's time if we are to have any prospect of survival or of attaining such a degree of peace, security, and well-being as would justify survival. But the American public can hardly learn any lesson from Revisionism if it does not even know that it exists, to say nothing of its content and implications.

Unless and until we can break through the historical blackout, now supported even by public policy, and enable the peoples of the world to know the facts concerning international relations during the last quarter of a century, there can be no real hope for the peace, security and prosperity which the present triumphs of science and technology could make possible. The well-being of the human race, if not its very survival, is very literally dependent on the triumph of Revisionism.

Source: Reprinted from *The Journal of Historical Review*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 53-83.

Published with permission of and courtesy to the Institute for Historical Review (IHR).

For the current IHR catalog, with a complete listing of books and audio and video tapes, send one dollar to:

Institute For Historical Review

Post Office Box 2739

Newport Beach, California 92659

email: ihr@ihr.org